



St. Paul's Episcopal Church Walnut Creek, CA

The Epistle

FEBRUARY 2010

Madly in Love with Jesus Christ

At a recent planning meeting someone asked me, "What are you passionate about?" My immediate answer was Jesus Christ! My love for Jesus is more important to me than any other thing in my life. My work for Jesus Christ comes before all-else in my life. My husband knows this, my son knows this, and my friends and extended family know this about me. I have given my whole life to Jesus' call and it makes me happy, and it gives me strength and I love my life because of who Jesus is for me.

I can find no other issue, event, activity, or experience that can match the wonder of how I experience my relationship to Jesus. So when I fail at some discipline that Jesus taught I am very disappointed in myself. Try though I might, I do not always succeed in living up to every part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

The good news is that Jesus doesn't care when I fail. Jesus does not hold me to the standards that I seek. Jesus is happy with my stumbling efforts. (Whew—thank God because I stumble a lot!) In fact, Jesus is more concerned with my efforts and attitudes than he is with the end results of my efforts.

If you've ever read C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles*



of *Narnia*, you'll notice that 75% of each of the books is about the journey, not the end result. That used to frustrate me until I realized that Aslan's teaching and the children's learning came from the journey, not at the arrival at their destination.

Some of you have experienced that exhilarating connection to the power of Jesus' love and peace. Some of you are searching for that connection, some of you don't have a clue about what I am expressing. That's life in our faith tradition! We're all on the journey in different ways and it doesn't matter where you are in your connection to Jesus. It certainly doesn't matter to God at any rate.

Because God is going to love you and wait patiently for you to realize how much better your life can be when you follow Jesus Christ. It's not about following rules and commandments; Jesus beckons to us with his teachings and examples because living in the Christian way WORKS.

My prayer for you is that you find yourself somewhere on the journey toward full Christian living.

Blessings,

Rev. Sylvia

The Gospel of Luke

— By Rev. Margaretmary Staller

Who wrote this Gospel? If it is Luke, then who was he? What is his background? Was he really a physician? Luke never knew Jesus yet he has been instrumental in guiding generations along paths set forth by Jesus. Luke's association with St. Paul and the communities Paul founded are instrumental in developing Luke's theology.

The first century Christians began to wane in their belief of the Parousia, the second coming. Awareness of the Holy Spirit was the theology that kept the community together. Luke who introduced them to the presence of Jesus through the constant presence of the Holy Spirit sent to us by Jesus.

This was some of the exploration of the Gospel according to Luke that we explored on Wednesday evening, 1/27.

February 3rd we will look at the parallel births of John the Baptizer and Jesus. We will also explore the influence of John the Baptizer on the ministry of Jesus.

February 10th the literature reflecting victory and praise as hope will be the focus. These are The Magnificat (Lk. 1:46-55), The Benedictus (Lk 1:67-79), The Gloria in Excelsis (Lk. 2:14) and The Nunc Dimittas (Lk. 2:29-32).

Wednesdays 6:30 is a pot luck supper—study begins at 7:00 PM All in the Parish Hall.

Rev. Margaretmary Staller

St. Paul's Women's Lenten Series

— By Kate Nauer

Woman of all ages are warmly invited to attend our Monday morning Lenten series featuring the reflective material of Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister. We will gather for five Monday mornings in the Livingston Center beginning Feb 22, 10:30-11:45. Take a journey with women from around the world whose very lives cry justice and hope. We will meet women in Haiti, the Philippines, Brazil, India, Mali and the United States. Each week, we will look at one of the women's stories and reflect on how her story impacts our spirituality and prayer life throughout the season of lent and beyond.

To register, please email knauer@stpaulswc.org

2010 Wednesday Lenten Presentations

— by Rev. Don Adolphson

The topic to be explored is our understanding of the character of my Christian Empire. Our resource will be John Dominic Crossans' Book, "God and Empire." (Books are on sale in the Bookstore, 15% off).

There are TWO sessions each Wednesday: 10:00 AM and 6:30 PM. The sessions are scheduled for Wednesdays, Feb 24, March 3,10,17, 24. Light suppers will be provided in the evening / Bag lunches at noon. Child Care will also be provided in the evening.

Questions some might have:

- 1) What might I learn?
- 2) How might I be changed?
- 3) Is my parish involved? If so, how?
- 4) Might it be interesting?

We'll work on the answers in the sessions, but here's an early view:

- 1) What the end times will be like. When it will happen. How it is bring brought about.
- 2) Acquire great clarity about Jesus, the Bible, the future, my soul.
- 3) As our parish is like a franchise, it could be an example, a leader, a resource, towards the creation of the world as our Lord envisions.
- 4) Yes

For further information, please contact Rev. Don.

Sermons from Family Sunday

Editor's Note: On January 24, during the Family Service, our Youth had an opportunity to do the sermon. Printed below are each of the talks that were given.

One Body – Clare Orton

Though we may be one body, we, the body, are composed of each significant being. What makes us significant? How do we contribute to the body? A body has many working parts; which one am I? Which one are you? Maybe you and I make one part; maybe you, I, and another make an even bigger part. However, being a part is not simply being a fraction. We use our special skills and talents to contribute to our community. As a body, we combine these talents to make our community a working system. Though the parts of our community are not defined as arm, leg, head, hand, foot, nor face, everyone has a role. We use our talents to play those roles.

All I remember of my faith before moving to California and joining St. Paul's is a large, carpeted, wooden room. It was supposed to be Sunday school. When I was seven and moved here, I was in another Sunday school. I had never really come to church willingly; I came because somehow it was good for me, which was why my mom dragged me to it. Now that I've been here half of my life, I've become more independent in my faith. I've noticed that the church community is a close group. Everyone knows each other because most of the people here have been here for a while. Living here for seven years has made me another stitch in this tightly-knit community.

This mainly started when I started acolyting. I was coming to church to be part of the service, and seeing what the whole service was like. I hadn't come to church for the whole service much before then.

Youth group was another start. We would analyze our lives and faith, and on occasion, go outside of the church area. Since I started going to youth group, I have fed the homeless at Glide Memorial and St. Anthony's. These San Francisco trips were my first venturing out into the neglected world. I was interested and scared at the same time. There were so many of them, yet many volunteers willing to help. I remember wondering why those volunteers had come. What had brought them there? The handfuls of us were there, and weren't making a huge difference in the street life, but I knew we were affecting the homeless people there, for the day at least.

Working in the nursery has taught me about the church as well. Though being there instead of in the sanctuary kept me away from the service, I was able to see what goes

Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing – Luke Webster

Hiya everybody, I'm Luke if you didn't know. For those converts from the 7:30 service, I am the little kid who sat up front and always played with the tassel on the lectern stand. Now, I am just your average teenage troublemaker in the youth group.

With that, let me tell you about the body. The Bible says "God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be?" Now that is quite a sagacious phrase; to me, meaning that all of us work as one unit and what affects one will affect the others and so-forth.

Now I, for those who don't know, am a percussionist. I play in a band with several other musicians and meet every month or so and play in some night club just for kicks. So, taking this in the teenage band geek's perspective, with this universal body (and let's name it Sam) if Sam were the lead guitarist in a band, is it out of line if I were to say "what about Sam's best friend, Jeff, who is the vocalist"? Or the keyboardist or the bassist and all that jazz?

All of them have different views. There's the singer who is texting on the couch, the bassist who puts down a mad beat that he heard on the radio this morning, the guitarist who sits in the corner playing random solos, the drummer who can't do anything 'cuz his instrument is too loud to practice with everyone around and just watches the others (I know this from experience by the way). 'Till someone gets up and organizes things.

All of them practice separately. All think theirs is better. But in the end, all of the instruments are just as important as the next when it comes to playing music together.

God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. Now here we are. We are one body with all of our different parts. We are just one part of the greater cosmos of God's creation. We have been told that all paths lead to truth. You have your path as a Christian and someone else has his path as a Hindu and another as a Muslim, and they all meet at the same door.

Is it right to say that all of us should be of the same ori-

One Body - Continued from page 3

on simultaneously with everyone practicing their faith. I saw that the church hosts more than just mass and coffee hour, something I didn't bother to notice when I was in second grade.

I have heard time and again that my brother, John, was a great preacher. I knew that when he left, I was next in line for the tasks that would have been given to John, but now that he was a half a country away, that wasn't exactly possible. I knew I would be called to action, and I believe accepting the jobs given to me is me playing my personal role. I am here to follow my brother, but not be his shadow.

I am one with our Christian community body. I am motivated by knowing what is expected of me, willing to live up to a standard given to me. And even when I, too, leave the church, I will know that my faith started here at St. Paul's. Whether or not I wander out, with my individual impression of Christianity, I will know here was the beginning of the beginning.

Today... - Continued from page 3

gin and same understanding in order to understand each other? We have to accept and have faith that we can share this path together as we work to understand each other and bridge our cultural differences that sometimes get in the way and make us feel separate.

And how do we build this faith? To be able to look around seems to me all that is needed, because if we know how to look, then the whole thing becomes very clear. Nobody need tell you how to look. You just look. And wherever you look, you'll see families and neighbors just like us.

Can you then, seeing this whole picture, seeing it not verbally but actually, can you see that we are all part of this one body on the planet we call Earth? Do we all have to be eyes so we can see? Do we all have to be feet to walk the path? Do we all have to be ears to hear his message?

St. Paul's Family Camp - Save the Date!

CAMPERS and potential campers:

Dates for St. Paul's Family Camp 2010 are July 18 - 31. Please note that ALL registrants must set aside time so that someone from their "camping unit" will be available either to help pack up camp on July 31 in Garberville, or unpack and help with storage on Sun. Aug 1. This includes folks who attend as "weekenders" July 23-24-25. Kathy Rowe will begin registrations after Easter. Come one, come all.



Ring the Bell, Thedy!

Regular attendees of the chapel services know Thedy Maurer. She's our official "Church Mouse" who comes in every Thursday and straightens everything in the chapel and the church. But did you know January 11 was her 90th birthday? And that all this time, she has wanted to ring the chapel bell?

Well, January 11 was the day she rang the bell, and we have the picture to prove it! Happy Birthday, Thedy!

GET INVOLVED with CCIH!

— By Laura Williams

Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) provides permanent, affordable housing to 27 formerly homeless families at their Garden Park Apartments in Pleasant Hill. It's an amazing place where families stabilize and improve with the loving help of many faith communities and individual supporters. We invite you to join us in this important work! Here are some ideas:

- Provide a meal for a monthly Tenant Meeting Every month, residents of Garden Park Apartments attend a tenant meeting and share meal with each other. These community meetings are essential in building the community, reinforcing the tenants roles as stakeholders in their community and allowing them to learn important skills needed to continually improve their lives. Congregations provide a meal to feed 35 people.
- Conduct an enrichment activity for the tenants Organize an activity such as a summer barbeque for families, an hour-long craft activity for the kids, or a specialty program for the adults such as budgeting or cooking.
- Help with on-site maintenance and clean-up CCIH relies on groups to help with special projects and spring and fall grounds maintenance. In the past, congregations have helped build play structures, prune bushes and winterize gardens.
- Provide a food box for new families Put together welcome boxes of food for new families that move into the community. A list is provided to guide the food collection.
- Conduct a backpack drive Throughout the summer, congregations collect school supplies for distribution to all school-age children of Garden Park in August. A list of requested items is provided to guide the drive.
- Participate in the holiday gift drive Starting late September, congregations are solicited to help fill the wish lists of the various families at Garden Park Apartments. Wrapped and labeled collected items are delivered in December.
- Help furnish apartments Help furnish recently vacated units with items such as small kitchen appliances, apartment-size furniture, linen and cleaning products.

For more information or to help with any of these activities, please contact Laura Williams at (925) 944-5288.

Warm Winter Nights Wrap-Up - 2010

—By Leslie Dawson

Thank you to all of you who contributed time, money, support and prayers to this year's Winter Nights program hosted by St. Paul's between January 4th -18th . We hosted 35 people in 9 family groupings that included a one-month old infant, a couple of teenagers and 20 other children in between these ages.

I am especially grateful for the strong response to the sign-ups this year. There were over 100 volunteers that helped with this ministry during the two weeks. There is not room here to thank all who participated individually, but you all know who you are. I do need to extend a special thanks to Lyle Morton, Anne Morton, Sue Phalen, Pete Banwell and Earl Schremp for their extra effort and service to this project.

For me, it is heartbreaking to watch these families pack up all their belongings to move on to the next Church at the end of the two weeks. They have no permanent home, no doors they can close for quiet and no place to really "land" after a long day. Yet it is comforting to know that because of the dozens of churches and thousands of volunteers who operate the Winter Nights Program, they are not living in their cars or under bridges.

It was also rather heartbreaking to watch Jim Bell, Mike Siebert, Pete Banwell and Lyle Morton load up the truck on Monday in the pouring rain. Thank you gentlemen... and I hope you've all warmed up and dried out by now!

As I say every year, it is blessing to be a part of what I believe is God's work. I hope you had an opportunity to experience it and please join us next year.

Journey to an Unknown Place

Ever-present God,

You call us on a journey to a place we do not know.

We are not where we started.

We have not reached our destination.

We are not sure where we are or who we are.

This is not a comfortable place.

Be among us, we pray.

Calm our fears, save us from discouragement,

Open our hearts to your guidance so that

Our journey to this Unknown Place

Continues as a journey of trust.

Amen

Diocesan Commission for the Environment:

The month of February is the perfect time to Love our Neighbors. Congregations who are members of Interfaith Power and Light all over the United States are sending our legislators valentines encouraging them to love their neighbors by passing a strong climate bill. For more information about the faith community's response to climate change and how rising, warming ocean waters are affecting communities around the world, visit www.interfaithpower.org

Save the Date!

Faith in Action Discussion

March 20th @ 9:00 am

All are welcome and all are encouraged to attend so please save this important date.

Registration and more details will be available mid February.

Tax-Aide is Returning to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in February, 2010

After a very successful 2009 tax season, IRS Certified Tax-Aide Counselors will be returning to the Parish Hall on Mondays and Tuesdays to prepare and e-file 2009 federal and state tax returns, from Monday, February 8th through Tuesday, April 13th.

In 2009, volunteers prepared over 500 Federal Tax returns which produced refunds over \$412,000, an average of \$1,300 per return. The Counselors answered questions of and provided assistance to approximately 150 people inquiring about other tax matters. ALL OF THIS SERVICE IS PROVIDED FOR FREE!

To make an appointment to have your tax returns prepared at St. Paul's Parish Hall, call 925-979-5013. Appointments are available 9:00am – 3:00pm. Walk-ins are welcome.

What to bring to the Tax Counseling Session:

- Social Security Cards for self, spouse, and dependents; Social Security numbers for child care providers and alimony recipients.
- Copies of 2008 tax returns.
- W-2 forms, Forms 1099 for Social Security; pension, IRA distributions, interest, dividends and miscellaneous income.
- Education expenses and scholarship income.
- Cost basis and date of purchase for stock and/or mutual fund sales.
- Closing statements for purchase or sale of a home in 2009.
- To itemize, bring a list of taxes paid, medical expenses, mortgage interest, auto registration VLF fees, and charitable contributions with receipts.
- If not itemizing, property taxes paid and amount of sales tax paid on a new qualifying motor vehicle.
- If you will have a tax refund, bring a check showing routing and account numbers for direct deposit.

Both spouses must be present to sign a joint return to be electronically filed.

What I Learned from My Aunt

On the Tenth Day of Christmas my wife's and my dear Aunt Joy died, a very fulfilled nonagenarian whom we already miss very much. I learned important lessons from her living as well as in her dying.

From her living:

- I learned to live life to the max. A retired school teacher, Joy lived on saltines and cottage cheese to be able to afford the opera which was her passion.
- I learned not to fold when your legs are shot out from under you by the death of a beloved and loving spouse. Widowed, Joy traveled the world for twenty years to see opera and made new opera-loving friends wherever she went.
- I learned that an olive will do very well with excellent gin to make a martini; no vermouth is necessary.

In her dying:

- I learned courage in not shrinking from a decision to undergo a medical procedure that might make me better enough to return to the opera but is just as likely to release me to join my long-departed spouse in heaven, and to fear not death but rather lingering.
- I learned that having an executed Advance Medical Directive will avoid unwanted attempts at resuscitation.
- I learned that if I do not make funeral pre-arrangements myself, then my loved ones will have to scramble to do so at the awkward time of my death.
- I learned by her example to follow The Book of Common Prayer (p.445) rubric to make a will, "arranging for the disposal of temporal goods, not neglecting, if able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable purposes." Joy remembered her church.
- I learned to keep a will up to date, making necessary adjustments dictated by changes in my financial and personal circumstances-- hopefully making amendments in a more timely manner than between heart-attacks, as Aunt Joy did.

Keeping my desk and attic cleaned out would undoubtedly also be a mercy to my survivors-- but this is probably more than I can do. I feel that I'll do well enough to practice the items above.

How about you? What mercy will you show your survivors? Please call me if I may assist you.

The Rev. Richard L. Schaper, CFP (415) 869-7812

Gift Planning Officer RichardS@DioCal.org

Episcopal Diocese of California EpiscopalGift.org

Crossan Lecture Series Concludes Successfully

Over a year ago, Rev. Sylvia and Donna Colombo dreamed about a lecture series, headed by the famous theologian, Dominic Crossan. On the weekend before Christmas, that dream became a reality. Better yet, it was a resounding success.

On the weekend of December 18-20, St. Paul's hosted 176 people who participated in the series. Over half of these were from outside our parish—indeed, many were outside our denomination. The feedback from our visitors was universally positive. They appreciated the opportunity to hear a world class speaker, and (as we all know so well) St. Paul's hospitality was second to none. Although many events of this type had not succeeded in the past, ours did. We made a profit of over \$2,700 from the event, which the team suggests be retained in Adult Formation as "seed money" for the next event. The Bookstore also benefited, both from sales of Crossan's books and other seasonal items—truly a win-win.

The planning team feels that this kind of event is something that we should repeat on an annual basis. However, the event took months of planning and execution, and would best be done with a standing committee under the auspices of Adult Formation. That recommendation has been forwarded to the Vestry. The team suggested (based on lessons learned with this event) that the next event might be best scheduled for Lent 2011. This timeframe allows for adequate planning and execution time, as well as lead time to schedule an appropriate speaker.

All of us at St. Paul's can be proud of another successful effort, and thankful for all the volunteers who helped with this series.

Lent and Easter Schedules

February 16 Shrove Tuesday 6pm (Pancake Supper)

Lent Begins

February 17 Ash Wednesday 12:15pm and 7pm

Lenten Series

February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24 6:30

Holy Week

March 28 Palm Sunday 7:30am and 10am

March 31 Tenebrae 7pm

April 1 Maunday Thursday 7pm

April 2 Good Friday 12:15pm and 7pm

Easter

April 3 Easter Vigil 8pm

April 4 Easter Sunday 7am, 9am, 11am

A Stewardship Story

— By Jim Bell

The principals of Stewardship are based on the tenants of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Question: What do you get when you have a gift of \$1,000.00 each from two anonymous donors and a gift of \$250.00 from the Spring Rummage Sale and the gift of Time and Talent from Jonathan Hekmet and his friend Butch?

Answer: The Fellowship House got a new Tank Less Hot Water Heater.

The old hot water heater was a perfectly good 40 gallon hot water heater. But when you have a number of homeless people in the Fresh Start program trying to take showers and do their laundry, 40 gallons of hot water doesn't last long. With the installation of the new hot water heater, two showers can be taken at the same time and not run out of hot water. Anne Morton said it was nice this year because she didn't have to refuse anyone in the Warm Winter Night program a shower because there was no hot water.

The Tank Less Hot Water Heater was installed by Jonathan and Butch over the Christmas and New Year holidays. The installation was done working around Fellowship House schedule. Fellowship House has many outside users including Fresh Start (Tuesdays and Thursdays), and multiple AA meetings which fill the schedule during the week. The installation required a larger gas line to be installed, which required a cement saw to saw through the sidewalk at Fellowship house, and a trench to be dug to bury the gas line. Jonathan and Butch worked in the rain to dig the required trench. And one evening, they worked until 8:30pm trying to complete the installation but they were foiled by a faulty gas safety valve. They were back on the job at 7:00am the next morning with a new gas safety valve and the installation was completed.

Thanks to Jonathan and Butch who gave their time and talent. And thanks to those who gave their treasure so this project could go forward and be completed.





Vestry

To join a team, contact the Vestry Liaison listed.

Senior Warden
People's Warden
CFO
Clerk

Marianne Orton (12)
Tom Tcheng (11)
Jerry Williams
Julie Aspden

seniorwarden@stpaulswc.org
juniorwarden@stpaulswc.org
cfo@stpaulswc.org
clerkofthevestry@stpaulswc.org

Ministry Teams (to be decided)

Donna Colombo (13)
Laurie Suda (13)
Anne-Leith Matlock (13)
Mike Yale (13)
Mike Siebert (12)
Marianne Orton (12)
Jim Bell (12)
Julie Layne (12)
Kat Royeton (11)
Michael Kus (11)
Tom Tcheng (11)
Savannah Amerson (11)

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1924 Trinity Avenue
Walnut Creek CA 94596**

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Rector

The Rev. M. Sylvia O. Vásquez *svasquez@stpaulswc.org*

Assisting Clergy

The Rev. George C. L. Ross *gcross@stpaulswc.org*

Deacon

The Rev. Donald Adolphson *dadolphson@stpaulswc.org*

Deacon

The Rev. Margaretmary Staller *mbstaller@stpaulswc.org*

Associate for Ministries

Kate Nauer *knauer@stpaulswc.org*

Parish Administrator

Ti Klingler *tiklingler@stpaulswc.org*